



# **New initiative to boost teacher, student success in Pojoaque**

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“The value of education and the critical role it plays in the future success of both Northern New Mexico and Los Alamos National Laboratory cannot be overstated,” says Terry C. Wallace, Jr., the Laboratory’s director, speaking at the launch of the region’s first professional development school.

“Given this, we’re very excited to collaborate with our K-12 and higher education partners to bring a new approach to teacher professional development to Northern New Mexico. By helping to support our educators, we also support our students—and we all benefit.”

That school is a partnership between Los Alamos National Laboratory, Pojoaque Valley School District (PVSD) and New Mexico Highlands University, and it was officially launched at a PVSD board meeting September 26.

Known as the Regional Partnership School (RPS), its goal is to combine Pojoaque Valley Schools, Laboratory, and Highlands expertise and resources to support improved teaching and learning (particularly in the crucial grades 4-8), leading to better outcomes for teachers and students. It is also intended to be a model of innovation for New Mexico educators and policy makers.

“I’m delighted Pojoaque can be a part of this innovative development,” says Jon Paul Romero, president of the PVSD Board of Education. “Our students deserve this.”

Sam Minner (far end of the table) address the audience at the launch of the Regional Partnership School.

## **First of its kind in the state**

The RPS will be the first program in the state that strategically combines a school district, a university teacher education program and a major employer. Four education specialists from the Laboratory will be supporting the initiative, which is being implemented across PVSD’s existing intermediate school, sixth grade academy and middle school.

The partners have spent the last year developing a plan which coordinates professional development for current in-service teachers and pre-service teachers from NMHU's School of Education, giving future teachers, current teachers and education leaders the opportunity to continuously improve their craft.

Implementation of the plan starts this school year, with the five-year program following the professional development school approach that has enjoyed success across the country. In this model a school becomes a center of excellence in teacher development in much the same way as a teaching hospital fosters the development of doctors and medical research.

“New Mexico Highlands University is proud to be the higher education institution partner for the Regional Partnership School,” says Sam Minner, president of New Mexico Highlands University. “The opportunity to work with the Pojoaque Valley School District and Los Alamos National Laboratory to enhance the education of pre-service and in-service teachers in a school setting will ensure that our teachers are prepared to go into classrooms ready to meet the needs of students.”

**Los Alamos National Laboratory**

**[www.lanl.gov](http://www.lanl.gov)**

**(505) 667-7000**

**Los Alamos, NM**

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